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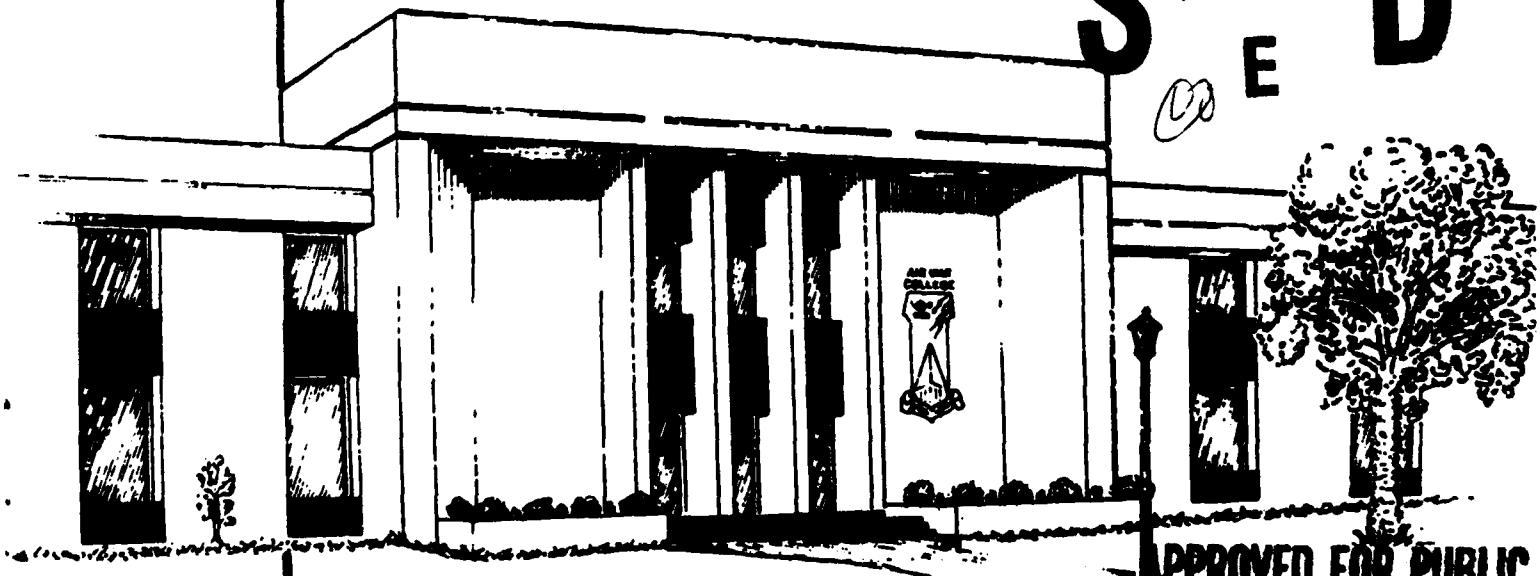
COMMAND AND CONTROL OF THE NATO
CENTRAL REGION AIR FORCES

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AIR UNIVERSITY
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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COMMAND AND CONTROL OF THE NATO
CENTRAL REGION AIR FORCES

by

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A DEFENSE ANALYTICAL STUDY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
IN
FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM
REQUIREMENT

Advisor: Group Captain Jeremy G. Saye

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: Command and Control of the NATO Central Region Air Forces

AUTHOR: Gerard L. Rifenburg, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

The NATO Central Region Air Command and Control (C₂) structure is examined, focusing on the period from the creation of Allied Air Forces Central Europe (AAFCE) in the mid-1970s to the present. This paper will show how the factors of consensus, forces, and the strategy of flexible response influenced the evolution of the C₂ structure. Of these factors, consensus is the most important, and the ability to achieve consensus will be the determining factor if any change to the present structure is to occur in the future. The author's contention is that there are too many layers of command and control within the central region. Options for simplifying the C₂ structure have not been supported by a consensus of opinion, except for a movement to combine Sector Operations Centers with Allied Tactical Operations Centers throughout the Central Region. Proposals to delete a layer of command, have not received broad support. Arguments exist for deleting either the Allied Tactical Air Forces (the authors choice) or AAFCE, as fully manned headquarters. The conclusion points out that, as there is no consensus on what to do, the C₂ structure will probably remain unchanged. (RP)

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lieutenant Colonel Gerard L. Rifenburg (B.S., United States Air Force Academy, 1969; M.A., Troy State University, 1977) has been interested in NATO military affairs since he was stationed in Heidelberg, Germany at Headquarters Fourth Allied Tactical Air Force (4 ATAF) from 1982 to 1985. While serving in 4 ATAF and as an evaluator on the Allied Air Forces Central Europe Tactical Evaluation Team, he traveled throughout the entire NATO Central Region, and became very familiar with the NATO command and control structure. He is a graduate of the United States Air Force Air Command and Staff College, and a graduate of the Air War College, class of 1989.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

From the early 1950's the Command and Control (C²) structure of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Central Region has been changing. Initially, in 1951, both land and air forces as part of Allied Command Europe (ACE) were organized under either Allied Air Forces Central Europe (AAFCE) or Allied Land Forces Central Europe (ALFCE), respectively, both located at Fontainebleau. Shortly thereafter, another headquarters, Allied Forces Central Europe (AFCENT) was created and inserted between ACE and AAFCE/ALFCE. Subsequently, AAFCE changed its name to AIRCENT and its corresponding land headquarters became LANDCENT. When France withdrew from the NATO military organization in 1966, AIRCENT and LANDCENT were dissolved, and many of the personnel of those two headquarters were adsorbed by AFCENT, which moved to Brunsum, the Netherlands, in 1967.¹

Subordinate to AFCENT, a joint headquarters which evolved to be heavily land oriented, air forces within the Central Region were organized under Allied Tactical Air Force (ATAF) command. Second Allied Tactical Air Force (2 ATAF), located at Rheindahlen, Germany, had operational control over Belgian, British, Dutch, German, and United States (U.S.) forces stationed in the northern half of the Central Region. Fourth Allied Tactical Air Force (4 ATAF), initially located at

Wiesbaden Air Base, then at Ramstein, and currently in Heidelberg, Germany, exercised operational control over Canadian, German, and U.S. forces in the southern half of the Central Region. A principle task of the ATAFs was to establish and maintain cooperation with the Central Region army groups in their area of responsibility.² The land forces associated with Two and Four ATAF were the Northern Army Group (NORTHAG) and the Central Army Group (CENTAG), respectively.

Subordinate to each ATAF, detailed planning for defensive operations was delegated to Sector Operations Centers (SOCs). This then was the command and control structure for NATO Central Region Air Forces as the 1970s began. The chain of command ran from AFCENT, a land oriented joint command, to the two ATAFs, then through SOCs to the individual units.

This paper will examine the command and control structure for the NATO Central Region Air Forces. The focus of the study will concentrate on the period from the middle 1970s, to the present. First, an overview of NATO will cover three diverse but related subjects: consensus, forces, and strategy. These three subjects are related because they are each significant factors which influenced the evolution of the Central Region Air C² structure.

The next chapter will discuss the reasons why the C² structure is organized as it is. Conflicting perspectives will be presented, concerning the formation of AAFCE in the 1970s. Both in this chapter and in chapter IV, positive and negative

aspects of the current structure will be examined. The role of AAAFCE will be covered, as well as the role of the NATO Allied Tactical Air Forces. Some conclusions will then be drawn as to the future of the Central Region C² structure.

The principal conclusion of this paper will be that while the present NATO Central Region Air C² structure may not be perfect, it is neither inadequate, nor is there consensus on any future C² framework. Consensus, being central to the NATO decision process, will be the first topic to be addressed.

CHAPTER II

NATO COMMAND AND CONTROL - OVERVIEW

Consensus.

NATO was established in the 1940s for the purpose of preventing or countering, should prevention fail, Soviet conventional aggression.¹ At this point it needs to be stressed that NATO is made up of a conglomerate of sixteen sovereign nations, bound together for the purpose of providing common security and stability. As previously stated, six nations, Belgium, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States provide the forces for employment within the Central Region. The nations just mentioned were purposely listed alphabetically, since they are all equals who must work toward consensus for the alliance to work. Consensus is a key point. Any change to the alliance, especially concerning command and control, must be agreed upon by all. Without consensus, any discussion of change within the NATO alliance is just that, discussion, with little hope of change actually occurring.

As part of the research for this paper, nine field grade officers, each having extensive experience with the NATO Central Region C² structure/organization, were interviewed. These officers, of U.S., British, and German nationalities were all asked two questions. First, "Is the Central Region C² structure adequate, or should it be changed?" The second question asked, "If you could change it, how would it be

organized?" The answers to these two questions showed a total lack of consensus, although the majority did feel that the organization should be changed to make it more efficient.

As an example of the diversity of responses, of two British officers interviewed, one felt the current organization should not be changed, while the other felt that it should be. Answers to the second question also differed. The first officer, who felt that no change was needed, stated that there probably was a case to be made for eliminating the ATAFs. The second officer thought the structure should be changed, but the organization to be eliminated, and I quote, "should logically be AAFCE."

In his end of tour report in 1977, General Richard H. Ellis wrote extensively on the matter of consensus. When discussing an issue to be resolved by Germany and the United States, he made the following comments.

By virtue of the fact that they are the two strongest and wealthiest nations of the alliance, the U.S. and the Federal Republic of Germany have a special relationship. Certainly, if one or the other does not go along with a particular project, the odds against its success are great. Care must be exercised therefore, that on the big issues the U.S. and Germany are in concert. But the alliance has many dimensions, there are bilateral arrangements between several combinations of nations and there is a European only part of the alliance. . . . National considerations - whether they are U.S. or those of other alliance partners - were an important part of every problem undertaken by AAFCE.²

The need for consensus is probably the most important issue affecting the NATO C² structure. To reiterate, without consensus, any discussion of change is meaningless.

Forces.

NATO forces are a conglomerate of national forces. Training of all NATO forces is a national responsibility, as is maintenance, procurement, logistical support, and so on. Because individual nations allow NATO to employ their forces in wartime, the subject of operational control of forces is somewhat complicated.

Within the Central Region, "Command Forces," those forces commanded by NATO in peacetime, consist of air defense fighter aircraft, surface-to-air missile systems, and air defense radar sites. Defensive forces are under the operational control of a NATO Sector Operations Center (SOC).

Offensive forces, numbering some 2400 aircraft, remain under national control until political decisions turn them over to NATO.³ In war, offensive units would receive their taskings from an Allied Tactical Operations Center (ATOC). This distinction of forces is an important factor when determining what type of C² structure will best suit the needs of NATO. Whatever structure is developed, it must be capable of employing the defensive forces of NATO at any time, and it must also be capable of absorbing the offensive capability, withheld by the nations, but provided to NATO in wartime.

Flexible Response.

The NATO military objectives have been constant from the outset. Those objectives are to deter Warsaw Pact assault, and if attacked, to defend forward and restore territorial integrity. The NATO Military Committee (MC) reiterated those objectives in MC document 14/3 in 1967. MC 14/3 not only restated the NATO objectives, but it also announced a change in the NATO strategy from an earlier doctrine of "massive retaliation" to the current philosophy of "flexible response."⁴

The concept of flexible response removed much of the emphasis that was placed on the U.S. nuclear umbrella as the primary deterrent of aggression, although the U.S. strategic umbrella is still vital to NATO. Flexible response, to be successful, depends on a spectrum of weaponry, from strategic to conventional, and the adoption of this strategy in 1967 complicated the tasks required of the command and control structure, especially concerning the employment of air power.

Prior to flexible response, if aggression did occur, the command and control organization had simply to employ defensive forces, and if defense failed, massive retaliation would be implemented. MC 14/3 changed the employment concept and thus dictated a change in the C² structure, because now offensive forces would have to be employed by NATO. Defense, followed by massive retaliation, was no longer the proper response to a Warsaw Pact attack.

CHAPTER III

THE CHANGING COMMAND AND CONTROL STRUCTURE

The re-establishment of AAFCE

The change of strategy alone did not dictate that the C² structure needed to change. A problem with the existing system also raised the cry for a new command and control structure. The problem was the growing divergence between Two and Four ATAF.

With their roots firmly established, having matured in the 1950s, both Two and Four ATAF had developed quite independently. They planned air operations for their own areas of responsibility with little regard for operations on their flanks. Thus, if war had occurred, the potential existed for two separate air wars to be conducted in the Central Region. Because of the different procedures developed for employment in each half of the Central Region, it became increasingly obvious that inter-operability was being lost. Not only were procedures different, but nearly every aspect of command and control differed, to include organizations, communications systems, and tactics.

Several remedies were proposed to correct this command and control dilemma. One proposal suggested eliminating the separate ATAFs on the central front, and having one headquarters. Because of the importance and strength of the U.S. air support, it was assumed that an American would command

this new combined headquarters.¹ As early as 1972, General David Jones, then commander of United States Air Forces Europe (USAFE), supported the idea that a consolidated ATAF clearly appeared to be the best ultimate solution.² Two ATAF did not want to dissolve the ATAFs. Central to their proposals was the belief that the ATAFs and the Army Groups had to be collocated. Of ten options for reorganization submitted to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in April of 1973 for consideration, the solution chosen, by consensus, was that a new headquarters would be formed, while leaving the ATAFs in tact.

Headquarters Allied Air Forces Central Europe was reformed in June, 1974, at its present location on Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Although Ramstein was initially selected as the home of the new command, the NATO Military Committee felt that its permanent location should be collocated with the existing AFCENT headquarters at Brunssum, Netherlands.³ A reason that AAFCE was not located at Brunssum can be linked with another totally different rational for its creation.

In the 1970s, the USAF supplied approximately 60 percent of the NATO Air Forces, but the senior airman in the chain of command was a British four star officer, in the position of Deputy Commander, AFCENT. Many felt that AFCENT should have been the organization to correct the growing divergence between the two ATAFs, and that a new headquarters was not needed. This group's conviction was that AAFCE was

created because of American desires to have a four star U.S. general officer at the top of the NATO Air Force chain of command. Since an American was to be in command of AAFCE, it made some sense to collocate AAFCE with USAFE at Ramstein.

The new AAFCE was formed to adhere to the principles of centralized control and decentralized execution through the two ATAFs.* The primary tasks assigned to AAFCE were to establish common air doctrines and procedures; improve inter-operability; promote standardization of techniques and procedures; and be responsible for tactical evaluation and standardization of training in the Central Region.*

SOCs and ATOCs

As previously mentioned, the majority of NATO air forces (the offensive forces) remain under national control until such time as they are turned over to NATO in wartime. This fact is partially responsible for the current NATO command and control structure below ATAF level.

Simultaneously with the formation of AAFCE in 1974, four ATOCs, two in each ATAF, were designated as NATO organizations. The ATOCs, collocated with already existing national command and control centers, are responsible for exercising tactical control of allocated offensive air resources and for detailed planning of offensive air operations.*

An important aspect of the ATOCs is that they are dual purpose facilities, serving both NATO and national roles, with commanders and most staff members having dual roles. This unique relationship does not exist at the next higher level of command, ATAF, but for one exception. The British Commander of Two ATAF also has a national role as the Commander of Royal Air Forces, Germany.

The change of strategy in the late sixties did not directly affect defensive operations in NATO. SOCs were still responsible for the conduct of defensive operations. Two ATAF had two subordinate SOCs, and Four ATAF had one subordinate SOC. In Four ATAF, beginning in the mid 1980s, there were two separate moves ongoing to change the command and control structure for defensive operations.

In October of 1983, Major General Harry A. Goodall, then commander of Seventeenth Air Force, with the additional roles of Commander SOC III and ATOC Sembach, initiated a concerted effort to collocate the two organizations.

In the NATO Central Region, serendipitous developments over the years have physically separated the control centers responsible for the timely tasking of offensive and defensive forces. Coordination between offense and defense has become costly, time consuming, and inefficient. The only place where offensive and defensive control staffs physically came together was at the Allied Tactical Air Force/Air Operations Center (ATAF/AOC) and at the operational control level. At the tactical control level, where timely coordination is critical, we have ATOCs and SOCs separated not only by distance, but also by narrow perceptions of air battle priorities.⁷

In 1983, the initiative to collocate SOC III with ATOC Sembach was supported by the Commander in Chief (CINC) USAFE, and Seventeenth Air Force proceeded to demonstrate the advantages of combined ATOC/SOC operations. The approach taken was toward a command and control system like the classical United States Air Force (USAF) Tactical Air Control Center (TACC) which recognizes no distinction between operational control of Air Forces assigned.⁹

It must be stressed here that the idea of collocating SOC and ATOC functions at the tactical level was not a new issue in 1983, nor was it championed by the same nation. In the early 1970s, when the idea of a new location for SOC III was broached, the initial German Air Force reaction was that the appropriate place for SOC III would be in the new ATOC facility then being planned. However, at that time the idea was rejected by USAFE because of "a parochial insistence on developing an offensive taking capability."¹⁰

Thus, in early 1984, the USAFE community was moving toward a collocated ATOC/SOC facility which came to fruition in the late 1980s. The action was accomplished not without some tension. As late as 1986, General Donnelly, then commander of USAFE, was concerned that the consolidation effort would be viewed as a unilateral U.S. effort. He was also concerned that the British might push for elimination of Four ATAF if consolidation took place.¹⁰ The basis of this assertion is not known, but it does imply that at least one four star U.S.

general in the 1980s would probably not support elimination of the ATAFs as a course of action (a subject to be discussed in more detail later).

Simultaneously with the ongoing effort of the U.S. to collocate SOC III with ATOC Sembach, 4 ATAF was working a separate action to create another SOC, collocated with ATOC Messtetten. This action, supported by the German Air Force, was initiated because it was felt that span of control of SOC III was over extended. Thus, SOC IV was created and collocated with the existing ATOC at Messtetten.

The collocation of these ATOCs with already existing national command centers was done for many reasons. By collocating ATOCs with national facilities, the transition from peace to war could be accomplished efficiently without costly peacetime duplication of functions, manpower, or facilities.¹¹

Collocation, even with the advantages listed, has not been universally supported by all NATO members. Some state that collocation eases the enemy's targeting problem. Infrastructure problems are also severe, especially in the Two ATAF area, where new facilities are required to collocate ATOCs and SOCs.

Thus, the command and control structure has undergone several changes through the years. The current structure is shown in Appendix 1. This structure evolved through consensus, but questions concerning its ability to effectively employ the Central Region Air Forces remain. Can the current C² structure

effectively implement the strategy of flexible response? How well can it employ the Central Region Air Forces? What alternative structures might serve NATO better?

The answers to these questions will depend on the actor nations involved and the time period. Before any conclusions can be drawn though, some analysis of the present structure is essential.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT C² STRUCTURE

In his 1977 Research Report on this same subject, Lieutenant Colonel Teichmann, a German Air Force officer, devoted an entire chapter to an analysis of the "Present" C² structure. His primary criticism of the system then was as quoted below.

The establishment of Headquarters Allied Air Forces Central Europe (AAFCE) and the addition of four Allied Tactical Operations Centers to the NATO chain of command resulted in a total of ten intermediate air agencies/air headquarters placed at a total of three different levels of command between the allied air force units and Headquarters AFCENT. This fact alone, one could argue, clearly indicated that the principle of organizational simplicity was not adequately considered when the present command structure was designed and approved.¹

Since Colonel Teichmann's observation in 1977, the number of controlling agencies has actually increased by one, with the addition of SOC IV. The collocation of the Four ATAF SOCs with existing ATOCs has in fact decreased the number of C² locations, and should facilitate employment of dual roled assets within the Four ATAF area of operation. Still, the structure for the entire Central Region remains rather complex.

AAFCE and the ATAFs

The Commander of Allied Air Forces Central Europe (COMAAFCE) is the acknowledged Central Region Air Component Commander (ACC). He will have operational control of all Central Region air assets during war. In practice COMAAFCE delegates operational control of most central region air assets

to his ATAF commanders.³ COMAAFCE does the apportionment of air assets and allows the ATAFs to allocate their apportioned forces as they see fit. This concept of centralized command and decentralized execution through the two ATAFs is perceived as a way of welding the six Central Region nations together, enabling the flexibility of air power to be fully exploited.³

COMAAFCE's mission in war will be to direct the integrated employment of all Central Region Air Forces. He will assume operational command of the combined resources of his two ATAF commanders, and will be responsible to the Commander in Chief of Allied Forces Central Europe (CINCENT).⁴ This working relationship has evolved and is perceived as being an acceptable command and control structure. Even though it may be an acceptable structure for guiding the air war, it may not be the most efficient. Although AAFCE has managed to solve some of the problems that existed in the early 1970s, its creation spawned a new perceived problem.

As stated by Teichmann, the establishment of AAFCE certainly did not simplify the Central Region C² structure. There have been many, including the author of this paper, who firmly believe that the current C² structure has too many layers of command to efficiently prosecute a war. Although many hold this view, few agree on which organization or organizations should be removed to make the system better. Some assert that there are few supportable sound military reasons arguing for the the existence of ATAFs today. I submit

they remain as fully manned headquarters for reasons other than for effective and efficient employment of air power. When an ATAF is said to have operational control over nationally provided forces, the term "operational control" is almost meaningless. In actuality, AAFCE has ultimate operational control, and the primary role of the ATAF in both peace and war is to liaise with their respective Army group.

As mentioned earlier, the ATAFs are part of the initial command and control framework of NATO. They have been in existence longer than the present-day AAFCE. Additionally, the commanders and staffs at the ATAF headquarters serve, for the most part, in NATO billets only, and they do not serve in a national role. Between Two and Four ATAF, there are six general officer billets, representing five nations. The ATAFs are NATO "tradition." They are bastions of NATO solidarity. I reiterate, their only meaningful function which could not be performed by a single organization (read AAFCE) is the important role they accomplish as liaison with the Central Region Army Groups.

During an interview with Major General Todd, former Chief-of-Staff of Four ATAF, he stated that the number of C² organizations within the Central Region could be a detriment to effective employment of forces. Asked what he would do to better the situation, he stated that he would elect to dissolve the ATAFs, and replace them with liaison staffs at each corresponding Army Group.⁵

If one subscribes to the philosophy that a single air commander is essential to effective utilization of Central Region Air Forces, and if a goal of reorganization is to simplify the current organization, two alternatives are obvious. Either AAFCE or the ATAFs could be eliminated. One primary target, as in the 1970s, remain the ATAFs.

Prior to the formation of AAFCE, the primary mission of each ATAF was to ensure effective integration of assigned forces to counter aggression in their respective areas of responsibility, should aggression occur. This mission became AAFCE's primary mission in 1974, and since then, the primary mission of the ATAFs has become the coordination and integration of Air Forces with the Army. The U.S. Army Air Land Battle concept of the mid-1980s further cemented this essential mission in the Four ATAF area of responsibility.

The ATAFs have always been the logical interface point with the Central Region Army Groups. This fact can not be disputed, but as suggested by General Todd, this function could be accomplished by a staff, rather than by a fully manned headquarters.

The counter argument to eliminating the ATAFs is to eliminate AAFCE. This option would have the AFCENT headquarters, augmented by a few more airmen, accomplish the roles and missions currently done by AAFCE. The ACC would still be an airman, as the Deputy Commander of AFCENT, but that position might not be a four star billet, and it might not be

and American. The ramifications of this reorganization and its effects on the USAFE C² structure are obvious.

The ATOC/SOC Issue

Beneath ATAF command level, the situation of separated SOCs and ATOCs with division of air defense and offensive air functions has often been described as a problem. Again, in Teichmann's 1977 research report he makes the following statement, which, I assert, remains true today.

Flexible employment of air power in the Central Region requires the capability to transfer forces between ATOCs and SOCs according to the prevailing situation and established priorities. This transfer must be accomplished quickly and smoothly, and the operational staffs at ATOCs must have the knowledge and expertise on how to best employ air forces of the various nationalities with different weapons systems, munitions, and electronic equipment. Considering the poor communications between the various ATOCs and also between ATOCs and SOCs and the fact that international manning of ATOCs is at present almost non-existent, it is concluded that the desired flexibility and interoperability of the Central Region air forces cannot be ensured at the present.⁶

The goal of collocation of offensive and defensive control for air assets has been a long term NATO desire also. The SHAPE Air Command and Control System Military Operational Requirements board has listed this as an objective since 1977.⁷

For emphasis, I must restate that the problems of poor communications between ATOCs and SOCs, combined with a lack of international manning at ATOC locations remain today. Although the consolidation of ATOCs and SOCs in the Four ATAF area has been a move in the right direction, flexibility of employment throughout the entire Central Region still cannot be ensured.

Thus, the number of agencies involved in the command and control of Central Region Air Forces has been criticized as a weakness of the current C² structure. But if the structure is perceived to have weaknesses, then there must be counter balancing strengths, or it certainly would have been changed.

Some strengths of the C² structure are obvious, and most have been mentioned. The transition to a NATO commanded wartime posture will most definitely be smoothed by the fact that ATOCs are also national command centers. The numbers of C² facilities certainly make the enemy's targeting problem more complex. Finally, at least in the case of the ATAFs, the coordination between Army Groups and supporting Air Forces has clearly been enhanced by the ATAFs.

The present Central Region C² structure has both strengths and weaknesses, but nowhere has it been said that it is inadequate. The separation of offensive and defensive functions can be criticized. The number of C² agencies in the Central Region has also been subject of criticism. But these flaws have not been perceived as being serious enough for all six Central Region nations to demand the structure be changed. An excerpt from the 1986 NATO Handbook states this fact quite emphatically.

The organization of the Commands is flexible enough and the liaison between them close enough to allow for mutual support in the event of war, and the rapid movement of the necessary land, sea and air forces to meet any situation likely to confront the Alliance.⁷

My contention is that this statement can be easily challenged, and that a different C² structure would serve the NATO Central Region Air Forces better in peace and war.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION - THE FUTURE CENTRAL REGION C² STRUCTURE

The NATO Central Region C² structure has evolved over the years, but only through consensus. The framework for the current structure can be traced back to the early 1950s, but major changes occurred in 1974 with the re-establishment of AAFCE and the creation of ATOCs as NATO C² organizations.

These major changes were prompted, in part, by a change in the NATO strategy, and the need to employ offensive air forces to implement this new strategy. Other factors, such as an alleged desire of the U.S. to have an American in command of NATO Central Region Air Forces, may have also been influential in prompting the need for change. Regardless of the factors leading to the major change that occurred in the 70s, one fact is dominant: consensus was required, or no change would have occurred.

Since the reorganization, all has not been well within NATO. Although the tasks of AAFCE of establishing common air doctrines and procedures, improving inter-operability, and promoting standardization of techniques and procedures, have been accomplished to some degree, the current C² structure is often criticized as being inefficient. A valid question is, "Can the current NATO Central Region Air Force C² structure implement the strategy of flexible response?" The answer to this question is an unqualified "maybe." Considering that

flexible employment of air power in either an offensive or defensive role must be blind to the artificial ATAF boundary, maybe this boundary should be eliminated, and the practical way to eliminate the boundary would be to eliminate the ATAFs.

Eliminating the ATAFS was one of the initial proposals made to SHAPE in 1973. It was not the chosen option then, but the idea has remained in the minds of many NATO officers. The problem perceived with the current structure, and as articulated by Lieutenant Colonel Teichmann in 1977, is that the principle of organizational simplicity was not adequately considered when the present command structure was designed and approved. Many, including the author of this paper, feel that there are too many layers of command in the present C² structure. This concern could be alleviated if the ATAFs were eliminated.

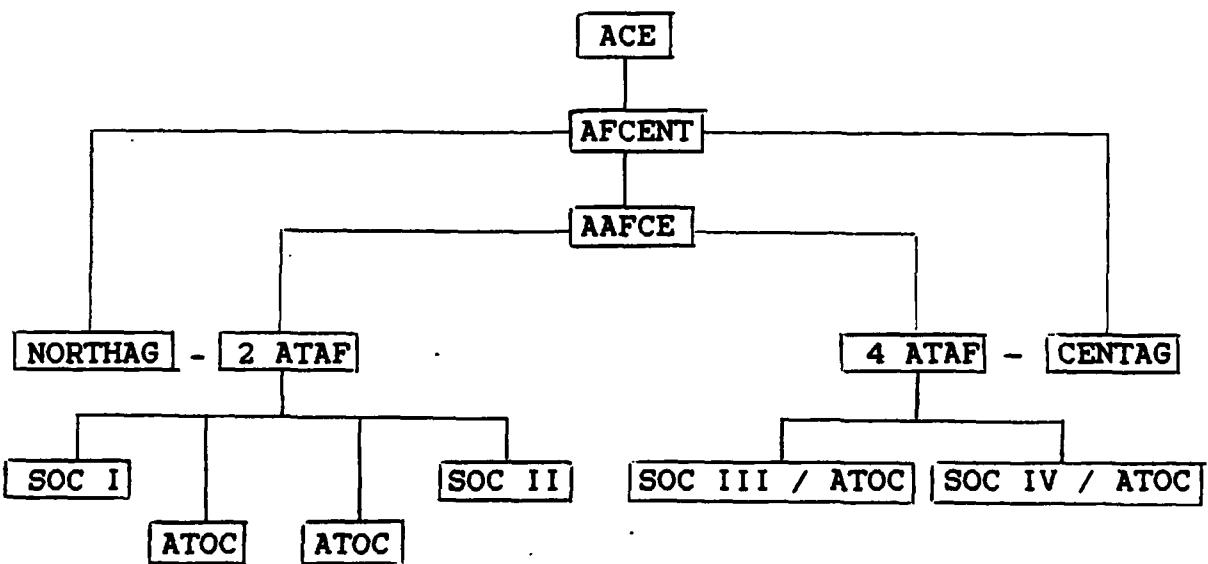
Elimination of the ATAFs is not the only alternative available to improve the C² structure. Another alternative is to eliminate AAFCE. If this option were selected, AFCENT would truly have to become a joint headquarters. By eliminating this one layer of command, the Central Region Air C² structure would be simplified, and thus C² might be more efficient.

Two recommendations for change have been presented, involving either the ATAFs or AAFCE. The organizations subordinate to these headquarters must also be considered when change is discussed.

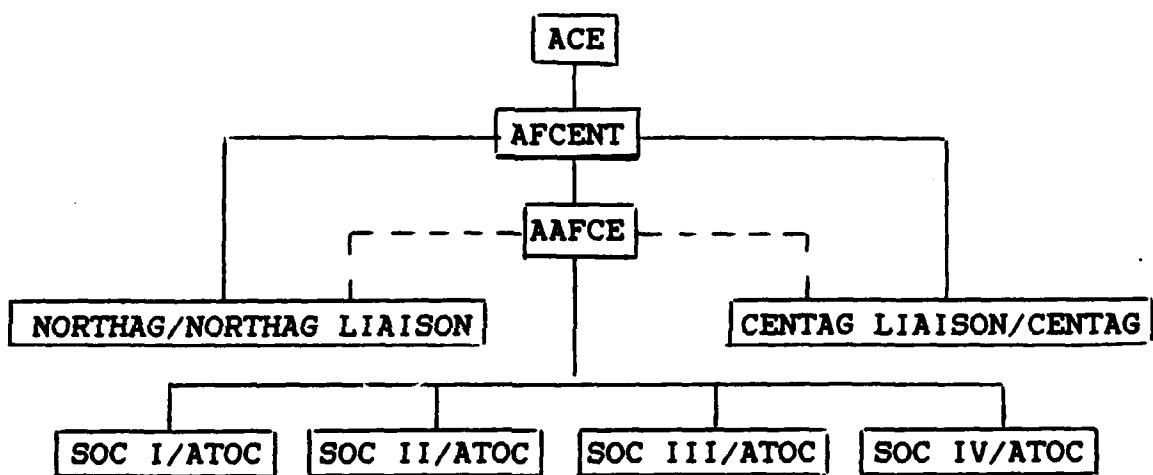
As NATO is a defensive alliance, the functions performed by the Central Region Sector Operations Centers will remain vital. Additionally, whatever C² system is devised must accommodate a smooth transition of command and control from each nation in peacetime, to NATO command and control during war. Consequently the Central Region Allied Tactical Operations Centers should also remain in the C² structure, for they, being national command centers, fulfill this vital task. Given the multi-role capability of most modern day fighters though, collocation of SOC^s and ATOCs, as has been done in the 4 ATAF area of responsibility, is a goal of NATO.

The proposed C² structures I have just described would both allow for centralized control and decentralized execution through four combined ATOCs/SOCs. The future command and control structure could look as depicted in Appendix 2 or Appendix 3. This author concludes that either of these organizational structures would allow more effective and efficient employment of limited Central Region Air Forces. But, as the contents of this paper show, my view does not represent a consensus. In fact, there is no consensus that the present organization should be changed at all. This leaves a third option concerning the present C² structure, and that is to leave it as it is.

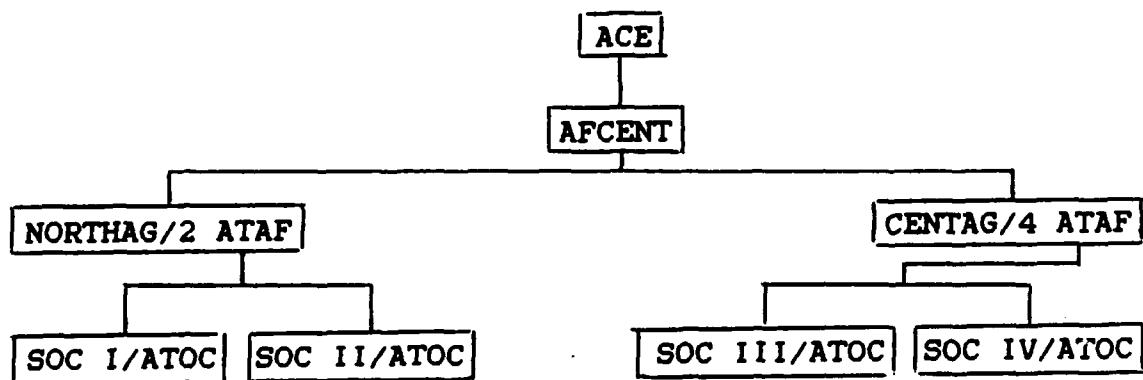
APPENDIX 1
CENTRAL REGION AIR FORCE COMMAND AND CONTROL STRUCTURE



APPENDIX 2
PROPOSED CENTRAL REGION AIR FORCE
COMMAND AND CONTROL STRUCTURE



APPENDIX 3
AN ALTERNATE CENTRAL REGION AIR FORCE
COMMAND AND CONTROL STRUCTURE



NOTES

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GLOSSARY

AAFCE	Allied Air Forces Central Europe
ACC	Air Component Commander
ACE	Allied Command Europe
AFCENT	Allied Forces Central Europe
ALFCE	Allied Land Force Central Europe
ATAF	Allied Tactical Air Force
ATOC	Allied Tactical Operations Center
AOC	Air Operations Center
C ²	Command and Control
CENTAG	Central Army Group
CINCENT	Commander in Chief Allied Forces Central Europe
COMAAFCE	Commander in Chief Allied Air Forces Central Europe
MC	Military Committee
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NORTHAG	Northern Army Group
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
SOC	Sector Operations Center
TACC	Tactical Air Control Center
U.S.	United States
USAFE	United States Air Forces Europe